

West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety After Action Report

WVDMAPS Overview

The West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety (DMAPS) is the following:

Adjutant General/National Guard (NG); Division of Corrections (DOC); Division of Justice and Community Services (DJCS); Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM); Homeland Security State Administrative Agency (HSSAA); Division of Juvenile Services (DJS); Division of Protective Services (DPS a/k/a Capitol Police); Parole Board; Regional Jail & Correctional Facility Authority (RJA); State Fire Marshal (SFM); West Virginia State Police (WVSP); and the West Virginia Intelligence/Fusion Center (WVI/FC). Both the HSSAA and the WVI/FC are components of the Office of the Secretary. The Central Offices of most of our agencies are situated in and around the Charleston, WV area, with outlying facilities located around the state. Additionally, the WVI/FC oversees the Fusion Liaison Officer (FLO) program which is a network of 40 plus trained local agency volunteers who serve as the main point of contact from their community to the WVI/FC in matters related to suspicious activity and information reporting from around the state. Finally, also represented in this report is the homeland security funded Citizen Corps program which supports the development of Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). Both are represented herein as these are state initiatives with established local members whose purpose is to build a culture of citizen preparedness.

Executive Summary

The storm had significant impact on the assets, facilities, operations and personnel of the entire department. Over 70% of the correctional facilities in the state lost commercial power for some period of time including 29 facilities managed by the DOC, five of our RJA jails and seven DJS locations. Many also suffered from the loss of potable water and communications. Maintaining adequate fuel for generators was a considerable challenge. Regardless, there were no threats to public safety and, in fact, no significant inmate incidents.

Numerous WVSP facilities lost power and communications. Nevertheless, the agency continued to perform all of its functions, and then some, stepping up patrols and helping to provide on the ground, situational awareness and also assisted numerous local agencies.

DHSEM immediately activated the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and continued to provide support and coordination to agencies locally and around the state.

Consistent with their purpose of providing safety and security at the Capitol Complex and other state facilities, DPS instantly began securing the Capitol Complex and other facilities within their purview and assessing damage.

The National Guard quickly mobilized and provided systematic assistance to communities, from debris removal, to delivery of emergency supplies, providing a calming presence that our citizens have come to expect.

The WVI/FC was initially unable to gain entry to their facility due to the electronic access system. But utilizing their standing capability to function remotely, they continued to support the response

West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety After Action Report

effort through the collection of information and distribution of intelligence. Further impact information is found in Appendix 1 in the Division AARs under their individual tabs.

After Action Review Process

Several actions were taken to ensure the Department effectively captured information on the storm impacts, the actions undertaken by the various divisions, as well as measures that should be taken to improve the capabilities of our agencies and their ability to respond to future incidents. All divisions were requested to gather information from throughout their agency, including impacted facilities, using individual feedback forms. A facilitated roundtable discussion was held during the Division Head Meeting on July 25th with all DMAPS entities participating. Each body submitted After Action information to the Cabinet Secretary's office, and along with additional feedback collected, this departmental After Action Report has been assembled.

Initial Analysis

Strengths

Repeated examples of interagency collaboration and cooperation were revealed via the agencies reports and near unanimous tributes were paid by the division heads to their staffs. We join in those commendations.

- All agencies continued to fulfill their responsibilities by performing their primary and essential duties despite significant impact on agency assets and personnel.
- Extensive cooperation including creative problem solving occurred among the Divisions within DMAPS as well as with other departments and agencies of state government, local agencies and the private sector. For example, the State Police Communications Center took emergency calls for Kanawha County Metro 911 until the capability had been restored and the Harrison County Board of Education stored frozen food for the nearby DJS maximum juvenile facility at Salem.
- Utilization of and the contribution from various volunteer groups supported by DMAPS agencies including volunteer fire departments, Citizen Corps and CERT Teams, and FLOs helped to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of citizens across the state. They gathered and validated information, operated shelters, managed points of distribution, conducted wellness checks, prepared and delivered emergency information packets, and assisted with clean-up efforts.

Further impacts information of the volunteers is included in Appendix 2, see FLO and CERT tabs.

Areas for Improvement

Despite the admirable performance of every division, numerous opportunities to improve agency performance day-to-day as well as in future incidents have been identified and can be seen in the individual Division After Action Reports. Clearly, we've made great inroads in educating the

West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety After Action Report

necessity for Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning. But just as clearly, there are gaps. Listed below are areas of improvement which were common to or have impact on multiple agencies.

- **Essential Personnel** – Apparent confusion in the determination of who constitutes essential personnel, unclear lines of succession, and internal and external contact lists were not consistently maintained. All of these would be understood and appropriately applied in more robust COOP plans.
- **Consolidated Emergency Operations Center (EOC)** – Multiple EOCs resulted in divergent priorities. It is understood that various agencies may need command centers where their operations are managed, but much confusion revolved around being called and behaving like Emergency Operations Centers. Unified Command did not emanate from the SEOC. There is limited available space at the SEOC in the basement of the east wing of the Capitol building which may have lead to multiple facilities. The capacity of the current phone system at the SEOC appeared inadequate to support a large response and became overloaded. There didn't seem to be surge capabilities.
- **Response Information** - The process whereby state agency response information is maintained to allow for easy access and coordination of effort is inconsistent. The type and amount of information to be maintained by state agencies in the State's web-based incident management tool E Team is unclear.
- **Public Information** - Systems were not robust and not coordinated. There was only sporadic use of contemporary systems such as social media. There were too many sources from which media and the public would get official information. There were no regularly schedule public briefings upon which the public could rely.
- **Plans and Procedures** - Existing plans and procedures, including the State Emergency Operations Plan, need to be reviewed and updated. Some responsibilities in the plan are assigned to agencies that have no capacity, knowledge, authority and/or commitment to fulfill them. Other agencies which have potential capability are not listed as support agencies within various functional annexes. In addition, some functions are assigned but there are no written operating procedures delegating authority, providing detail on available resources, standardizing processes among agencies, nor allowing capability to be validated.
- **E Team** - Current functionality and training is inadequate for the state's web-based incident management tool, E Team. Overall, there is not a common understanding of the philosophy and doctrine behind the utilization of the system, nor is there a common understanding in the manner in which data is used during and after an incident. Access to the system is undefined and inconsistent, as is the level of information maintained in the system. It lacks a user friendly situational awareness function. The system is inconsistent with the nationally recognized standard Incident Command System (ICS) which is the system used by first responders across the state. Infrequent training is offered to new users. There are no procedures on how information, including resource requests, are to be transmitted and logged when users do not have internet access during power outages.

West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety After Action Report

- **Communications** - Several communication issues arose during the incident. Loss of landline and cellular telephone service created issues at a number of correctional facilities. Cellular service is unavailable internally in some of these sites. Procurement of additional radio equipment and additional training on the state's Interoperable Radio Network is needed in several agencies. Some agencies identified the need to develop additional procedures when primary communication systems fail. As the government phone system has moved to Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) it has created additional vulnerabilities when there are network and electrical issues.
- **Generators** - Alternate power sources or lack thereof created many issues. Accounts of nonfunctioning generators, generators with inadequate power, inability to obtain fuel to power generators, facilities unequipped to use a generator, uptick in generator thefts, and in at least one instance, a cascading effect when the local public service district (PSD) unilaterally shut off water to the maximum security prison to conserve their power.
- **Fuel** – The fuel supply rapidly became an issue. Similar if not worse problems will arise during any significant evacuation internal or external to the state. Several agencies identified a critical need to increase the limited number of State owned fueling stations with alternate power sources available. Another issue arose when cash only was accepted for payment. Inconsistent or nonexistent public messaging regarding fuel. No designated fueling stations for emergency vehicles.
- **Personnel** – As indicated in the DHSEM AAR, the agency is not robust enough to staff liaisons at each of the emergency operations centers or manage all functions at the SEOC. Moreover, insufficient staff identified to provide support in SEOC so as to avoid staff burnout. Staff not specifically assigned to the Resource Management and Supply Distribution. Mass Care, or Donations Management functions.

Recommendations

During the departmental hotwash and within the division After Action Reports, numerous recommendations were put forward that will improve the response to future incidents. All divisions are implementing actions that are internal to their agency. The following recommendations involve multiple state agencies; partnership with federal and local government and the private sector; and/or a dedicated commitment of resources.

- **Continuity Planning** - Require all agencies to produce a properly formatted and tested Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that minimally includes written lines of succession, delegations of authorities, internal and external contact lists, procedures for working with reduced communications capabilities, and the suitability and requirements of alternate operational locations. Federal continuity guidance from FEMA contains ten elements to be included in continuity planning which will help to enhance the ability of agencies to continue to perform essential functions when they are directly impacted. Executive Order 13-10 directs

West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety After Action Report

each executive branch agency to prepare a COOP plan, and establishes a COOP Advisory Council. In fact, the Council's mission is "to review and evaluate the coordination of continuity of operations efforts within the executive branch." Compliance with this EO is recommended.

- **Unified Command/Consolidated Emergency Operations Center** - Designate a single location for a State Emergency Operations Center that has adequate space for agency representatives from all organizations that have designated responsibilities in the State Emergency Operations Plan. The location should also have adequate space for break out rooms to facilitate discussions of specific issues among stakeholders. Written guidelines, procedures and protocols for operation of the center, as well as the relationship with other organizational command centers, should be developed and expanded from existing documentation.
- **Public Information** – A coordinated system to distribute emergency information to the public should be developed, to include the utilization of newly available social media tools and other resources. Dialogue with the U. S. Postal Service to enlist their help in the distribution of flyers on the various locations of services such as cooling centers, shelters, food and water distribution sites, and other available assistance during large emergencies. Pre-identification of public information spokespersons to ensure consistency of information, along with the establishment of a regularly scheduled briefing.
- **State Emergency Operations Plan** - The State EOP should be intensively and extensively reviewed to incorporate realistic designation of capabilities and with more substantial input given by agencies with designated responsibilities in the plan. The agencies responsible to perform various functions need to be reviewed, clarified and updated. Inter-agency implementing procedures and Standard Operating Guidelines need to be developed for key functions such as resource management and distribution, donations management, and mass care services.
- **Employee Preparedness** – Re-establishment of a statewide information line to provide general information specific to state employees and others. Efforts to encourage employees to undertake personal preparedness actions need to be continued and stepped up. Many state employees were directly impacted by the storm, and though they largely continued to work, it demonstrated the need to encourage families to focus on their preparation.
- **Message Boards** - Installation of a dedicated power supply and backup supplies to dynamic message boards located on highways around the state. Utilization of signs to direct traveling public and others to emergency supplies.
- **Comprehensive Power Surveys** - For all DMAPS facilities to determine the existence and/or status of alternate power sources, including the identification of reasons for generator failures. This survey should include the PSDs and municipal water supply systems that serve them. The survey should also determine if generators are appropriate for the demands, are serviceable or require replacement, and ensure all critical facilities have an adequate back-up available or installed and that the appropriate connections exist. Better implementation plan to insure fuel for generators at all facilities is also needed, along with a regular testing schedule.

West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety After Action Report

Consideration should be given to converting existing generators to natural gas, specifically those facilities with ready access to a natural gas supply. All new generators should already run on natural gas before purchasing.

- **Miscellaneous Recommendations** - Development of a plan to strategically cache facility emergency supplies. Acquisition of satellite phones for remote correctional facilities. A single dedicated National Guard Liaison Officers should be assigned to individual counties so they can train and become familiar with the local first responder community. Greater utilization of the WVSP Academy which has housing capability as well as colleges/universities which can also mass feed.